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ing than we were before we discovered that race is at the bottom of much of all this mystery.

The difference between modern free institutions and ancient, which has within the past twenty-four years attracted most general notice, is the invention of representative government. This was unknown in Greece or Rome. It is to this, certainly, that the extraordinary possibility of territorial extension which we have witnessed in England and in America in the last one hundred years has been due. It does not seem to us that the author of these volumes has paid sufficient attention to it. He may be excused from having done so by the fact that Mr. Mill has devoted a volume to the subject, which contains probably all that, in the present state of political science, can be said. What the ultimate effects of representation are to be, it is as yet too early to say. And while the matter is in this state, it is, perhaps, well to defer positive estimates of the advantages and disadvantages of this purely Anglo-Saxon contribution to the art of government.

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2.—*The Beginnings of Christianity, with a View of the State of the Roman World at the Birth of Christ.* By GEORGE P. FISHER, D. D., Professor of Ecclesiastical History in Yale College; author of "Essays on the Supernatural Origin of Christianity," "The Reformation," etc. New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co. 1877. 8vo, pp. 411, 591.

THIS important and elaborate work undertakes, in the first place, to describe the ancient Roman world, including both heathen and Jewish society, in which Christianity took root and had its growth; and, in the second place, it critically considers the documents that record the beginnings of this religion; and, thirdly, it illustrates the headway which the movement made by the influence of Jesus and his associates. This is surely a task great enough to try the learning of any scholar and the sagacity of any thinker. It is no less a theme than the world of Cæsar and Herod, the Christ who came into it with his gospel, and the work done to give him and his gospel the victory. The first part, as the extent of the subject requires, is most fully and, perhaps, most satisfactorily treated, and it takes nearly half of the entire volume. The remainder of the volume is about equally divided between the second and third parts, a division of the space which gives more adequate room to the results of New Testament criticism than to the momentous, difficult,

and fascinating topic of the struggle of the new religion for its very life in the hostile and magnificent world of that day.

Dr. Fisher's position is, of course, that of a Christian believer ; yet he none the less claims to read history with a scholar's learning, and to interpret men and things with a philosopher's discrimination and comprehensiveness. He may seem to skeptics to be over-positive in his defense of Christian persons and principles, and critics may think that he passes too lightly over the difficulties in the way of the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament records. But no fair-minded and enlightened reader will charge him with any narrowness of view, or any indisposition to study and interpret his subject in all the many and various lights of the best literature and the most pronounced schools of thought. No man can read his survey of the Roman Empire in its civil polity, its Greek and Roman and Jewish religions, its philosophy, its morals, and its whole social condition, without being instructed and impressed by the range of careful study and the result of patient, candid, and judicious thought. In his statement of the relation of Christianity to the Jewish and heathen religions, and its appeal to the best elements of Roman culture, as well as its rebuke to the dominant Roman vices, Dr. Fisher proves his fellowship with the most generous school of students, and, in comparison with his catholic and humane survey of the rise of the new religion, Gibbon's famous chapter on that subject is superficial and unsatisfactory, especially in its emphasis upon the circumstances and its neglect of the vital powers that went with these claimants to the supremacy over the conscience and the heart of mankind. Allow what force we may to the five causes assigned by Gibbon for the spread of Christianity—the zeal of the early Christians, which he represents to have been derived from the Jews ; the doctrine of a future life of rewards and punishments ; the power of working miracles ascribed to the primitive Church ; the pure and austere morals of the Christians ; and the union and discipline of the Christian republic, the ecclesiastical community—allow all these causes of power, and still, as Dr. Fisher asks, what was back of them all to save them from the utter defeat that attended other schemes as daring, and what enabled these causes to unite in a person so unworldly, so humane, and self-sacrificing, as Jesus ? The author maintains that Gibbon leaves out what was the life and soul of the Christian religion and the secret of its power, the thought of Christ, the image of Christ, the great object of love and hope, and the source of inspiration. "The vic-

tory of Christianity in the Roman world was the victory of Christ, who was lifted up that he might draw all men with him."

The passages of the book that we would point out for the attention of scholars are those portions of the first part that treat of the influence of the Roman Empire upon Christianity, the yearnings for more light and better motive among the poets and philosophers of Greece, and the rise of a sense of justice and of universal humanity among the Romans, in spite of the hideous vices that prevailed; with the full and careful consideration of the systems of the Platonists and the Stoics. In the second part, Chapter X., on "The Water-Marks of Age in the New Testament Histories," cannot but interest and impress students who have been attracted by the sweeping denials of Baur and Strauss, or by Renan's easy method of doing away with the authority of these documents; while the closing chapter, on "The Characteristics of Christianity in the First Century," may stir the desire for a further handling of the subject by the same candid and accomplished pen.

Some nicer and more critical treatment of the relations of Jewish and Greek thought to Christian faith might be desired by philosophic scholars; and, perhaps, men of affairs and also followers of the dynamic school of science and of society would like a more adequate interpretation of the vital forces, the will and the muscle, perhaps the passion and the policy, that went into the new religion, and gave it the upper hand. But the book does excellently what it undertakes, and it is a substantial contribution to our literature. Is it not in the wholesome direction of what may be called our rising American Renaissance—the movement, not to supplant faith and devotion by mere taste and culture, but rather to nurture within religious sanctions the generous humanity and the enlightened philosophy, that shall remove the offense of the hard old theocracy, and make our art and science and letters a part of our heritage from the source of all good? Certainly Yale College, that began with a stern defense of the Puritan theocracy against the Harvard latitude then, has an ecclesiastical professor who is not behind Harvard in the humanities.

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3.—*Prose and Verse. Humorous, Satirical, and Sentimental.* By THOMAS MOORE, with Suppressed Passages from the "Memoirs of Lord Byron," chiefly from the Author's Manuscript, with notes edited by Richard Herne Shepherd, and a Preface by Richard